

ENTERPRISE POTTERY, STRAW STORAGE BUILDINGS
650 New York Avenue
Trenton
Mercer County
New Jersey

HAER No. NJ-105-B

HAER
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORDS
National Park Service
Northeast Region
Philadelphia Support Office
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, P.A. 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

ENTERPRISE POTTERY, STRAW STORAGE BUILDING

HAER No. NJ-105-B

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Location: 650 New York Avenue
Trenton, Mercer County, New Jersey
UTM: 18.521605.4453920
Quad: Trenton East, NJ-PA, 1:24,000

Date of Construction: Ca. 1900

Architect: Unknown

Present Owners: Robert J. and Marjorie J. Pierce
420 Paxson Avenue
Hamilton Township, New Jersey 06890

Present Use: Motor vehicle repair; storage

Significance: The Straw Storage Building of the Enterprise Pottery is significant as the former repository for straw used to pack sanitary pottery for shipment. Enterprise Pottery, one of more than a dozen sanitary potteries in operation in Trenton at the turn of the twentieth century, was reportedly the first purpose-built industrial pottery in the United States specifically set up to manufacture sanitary earthenware.

During the twentieth century, most of the buildings of Trenton's potteries have been demolished or substantially altered. The straw storage building of the Enterprise Pottery represents a rare survival from an industry on which Trenton built its reputation as a nationally important manufacturing center during the American Industrial Revolution.

Project Information: A cultural resources investigation for the proposed U.S. Route 1 Southbound exit to New York Avenue resulted in the identification of the former Enterprise Pottery as a contributing component of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Historic District. This district is listed in the New Jersey Register of Historic Places. Although the proposed action would not involve demolition of the existing buildings, it would have an adverse effect on the historic district. To mitigate the adverse effect, an agreement was reached between the New Jersey Department of Transportation and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, stipulating that the two existing buildings of the former Enterprise Pottery be recorded to standards of the Historic American Engineering Record.

Preparers of Documentation: Richard Meyer/ Project Manager
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SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF STRAW STORAGE BUILDING AND SETTING

The Enterprise Pottery property is located in an industrial area in the eastern portion of Trenton, New Jersey. Situated on the southeast side of New York Avenue, the property is bounded by warehouses on its northeast and southwest sides and by U.S. Route 1 (the Trenton Expressway) on the southeast side. The property contains two buildings, the Straw Storage Building, located on the north side of the lot, and the Manufacturing Building, located on the south side of the lot. The property, which is largely flat with an upward slope at its north edge, is bounded by a chain link and barbed wire fence. A driveway extends from New York Avenue at the northwest corner of the property and provides access to large gravel parking area adjacent to both buildings. These parking areas are used primarily to store truck trailers. The peripheries of the lot are overgrown.

Straw Storage Building

The Straw Storage Building is a rectangular, brick, gable roofed, two story building that measures approximately 100 feet long and 24 feet wide. It is constructed of brick laid in seven-course American bond. A low, flat roofed, rectangular concrete block scalehouse addition, measuring approximately 15 feet square, projects from the western portion of the southeast facade wall. This addition is fenestrated with large, metal framed, rectangular, single light windows. A door, situated in its west wall, is sheltered by a shed roofed awning. A square, concrete chimney adjoins the center of the east wall of the addition. The scalehouse is not shown on a 1963 map of the property and was presumably constructed after that time.

The main block of the building is four bays long and one bay wide. The western portion of the building, presently used as a truck repair facility, consists of a large open, single story bay. The roof is supported by steel king post trusses from which light fixtures are hung. A chain link tool cage adjoins a portion of one side wall, and open metal shelves adjoin a portion of the opposite wall. The floor of the bay is formed by poured concrete. A large, corrugated metal, overhead garage door is placed in the west gable end of the building. The eastern portion of the building is divided into two, two story bays.

The south facade and east wall of the building are fenestrated with single windows, some of which retain their original six over six, double hung sashes. The single window opening on the north wall has been bricked over. Several of these window openings, situated on the south wall, have segmentally arched lintels constructed of two rows of brick headers, while the remainder have flat brick lintels. All have stone sills. All windows are either covered with corrugated metal sheets or full-width, side-hinged, vertical board shutters. A second story window near the center of the south facade is sheltered by a shed roofed hood supported by angle braces.

Several doors are spaced along the south facade. At the east end is a steel door hidden behind an earlier vertical board door with strap hinges. West of this door are paired top-hung sliding, loading doors. Inset within these sliding doors is a side hinged, metal-clad, entry door. A single metal entry door is placed on the south wall east of the scalehouse addition.

The building has a corbeled brick cornice. The western end of the roof is sheathed in slate, while the eastern portion is sheathed in asphalt shingles. The south slope of the west end of the roof is pierced by two, rectangular, fixed, four-light skylights.

While the west end of the building contains one large, oblong, open bay, the eastern end of the building is divided into two small, rectangular rooms with low ceilings. These rooms have concrete floors. The ceiling of the first story east bay is sheathed in sheetrock. The ceiling of the first story central bay is sheathed in foil-coated insulation materials. Most interior walls are constructed of brick. The east wall of the central second story bay is constructed of wood, suggesting that the east end of the building originally may have been of wood framed construction. Wood rafters are visible in the second story rooms.

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The exact construction date of the building is not known. The earliest detailed map of the property, compiled in 1892, depicts three attached, rectangular, one and two story wood framed sheds on the approximate site of the straw storage building. As suggested by the interior construction of the central second story bay, the present building may incorporate at least a portion of these earlier buildings.

A 1908 map shows the building in roughly its present configuration. Two stories in height and divided into three bays, the west bay was used for straw storage, while the center bay was used as a carriage house. The east bay was used as a storage shed. This map also indicates that the building was of wood framed construction.

By 1927, the building was shown as brick. The similarity in plan between the 1908 building and the 1927 building suggests that the building was either reconstructed to the same plan or that masonry walls were built to enclose the wood framed structure. The west portion was still used for straw storage, while the central and east bays were used for general storage.

A ca. 1930 plot plan of the Enterprise Pottery shows the building divided into three bays. The western portion remained a straw storage house, the central section a wagon shed, and the east section a storage shed.

A photograph of the building on a ca. 1952 tax assessment card illustrates its appearance at that time. The building lacked the scalehouse addition. A single leaf, top-hung, metal door sheltered by a flat roofed awning, was located at the site of the present addition. A lower, flat roofed, two story addition extended from the west end of the building. Although its construction cannot be precisely determined from the photograph, it appears to have been fenestrated with panels of multi-light windows. The building was used as a workshop at that time.

The building's primary historic use was as a straw house or straw storage building. Bales of straw were kept in the building. The skylights at the west end may have been used to provide ventilation to reduce the danger of combustion. This straw was used as packing material for boxes used to ship the sanitary pottery produced by the plant. The straw cushioned the vessels and prevented them from shifting during shipment.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION/BIBLIOGRAPHY

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